



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MEMORANDUM

To: State Board of Education

From: Tom Watkins, Superintendent of Public Instruction *tn*

Date: December 10, 2003

Subject: Discussion Regarding NCLB-AYP and *Education YES!*

The first Report Card grades from *Education YES!*, Michigan's accreditation system, and adequate yearly progress (AYP) status required by *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) will be announced in January. These are important milestones for Michigan. This feat would be difficult even in the best of times. To be sure, with budget challenges and the like, these are far from the best of times. We are not alone in the controversy we face as we release our NCLB-AYP results. Other states are hearing resounding choruses of disapproval and discord as the attached article from the *Chicago Tribune* illustrates.

State (MCL 380.1280) and federal (NCLB of 2001) laws require MDE to develop and implement a state assessment system/report card to show how our schools are performing. To that end, with your guidance and leadership, thousands of educators, parents, and business groups have been engaged. The result of their efforts is an accreditation system that measures more than how our schools, teachers, and most importantly, our children do on a single test on a single day.

Over the past year, a group of national experts has advised the Department and the State Board of Education on the development and implementation of the accreditation system. This group advised us to consider the system as a "work-in-progress," due to changes in MEAP required by NCLB (e.g., testing all students in grades 3-8 annually in mathematics and language arts), as well as changes needed to amend the system after schools receive their initial grades.

With Jim Sandy's (Executive Director of Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence) help, we engaged Sandy Kress, President Bush's point person on NCLB, to blend *Education Yes!* with the massive NCLB law. At your November 2003 board meeting, Mr. Kress commended the Board, the Governor, and the Department for maintaining high standards and developing an accreditation system that is leading the way.

He said: "Michigan is known around the country for having a can-do attitude about school reform and making education better. From the Governor, to the Board, to (the department's) leadership, to the people and the educators across this state, saying, 'We're going to get it done, we have to raise the performance of all these students. We have our own ideas about how to do it, but we're going to get to the goal line'."

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

KATHLEEN N. STRAUS – PRESIDENT • HERBERT S. MOYER – VICE PRESIDENT
CAROLYN L. CURTIN – SECRETARY • JOHN C. AUSTIN – TREASURER
MARIANNE YARED MCGUIRE – NASBE DELEGATE • ELIZABETH W. BAUER
REGINALD M. TURNER • EILEEN LAPPIN WEISER

608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • (517) 373-3324

We have implemented an aggressive communications plan. Department staff have conducted hundreds of briefing meetings with educators, media outlets, editorial boards, legislators and education committees, business, civic, and parent organizations about the requirements under the state and federal law. Nine "Listen and Learn" sessions were held in the evening hours to maximize participation across the state to share our progress with implementing NCLB. We have listened to the public and as a result have modified our implementation plan. In concert with the Michigan School Public Relations Association, a "Tool Kit" for use by local school districts (www.michigan.gov/mde) was developed to help communicate with their communities.

As we report the first *Education YES!* grades and NCLB/AYP results, we are mindful that this is the first year of statewide implementation. As such, it must be viewed as a "work in progress." Michigan's accountability system will require continual adjustment as we gain experience with it. A focus group of educators, parents, and other stakeholders will be enlisted after the release of the AYP/Report Cards to gather additional information and recommend appropriate modifications for the future. We will use these data to adjust the system to ensure enhanced fairness and accuracy.

The MEAP process has stumbled in the past. Many of the problems this past year occurred because contractors did not produce on time; student identities were inadvertently duplicated when new students were entered into the student record system during the testing period; and some student test documents were lost. It took several months to clear up these discrepancies. All along the way, we were committed to working with school districts so that students were not penalized for adults' mistakes.

Several steps have been taken to avoid these challenges in the future. First, Dr. Edward Roeber, former MEAP supervisor and a nationally-recognized assessment expert, has been hired to oversee Michigan's assessment efforts. Second, the process for assigning identities to new students during the test period has been refined. Third, redundancy has been built into the system so that students missing school identification will be "cross checked" using school identification sheets included with the student answer sheets. Finally, a comprehensive schedule for all assessment activities will guide the team's efforts. (see attached MEAP Summary Schedule). Team performance and progress, including that of contractors, Center for Educational Performance and Information, Department of Technology, and Department of Education staff will be monitored closely. Issues that jeopardize reporting timeliness will be detected and resolved.

This has been a challenging year for Michigan education. New federal requirements, new data systems, the MEAP problems, and the new accreditation system coupled with new accountability requirements and fiscal constraints, have made for significant challenges for the Department as well as local educators. While these are not uncommon "growing pains" for new systems, steps are under way to continue to refine these systems so that they work the ways in which they were intended. And foremost, that the system helps local educators assure that all students achieve proficiency.

The State Accreditation and NCLB Laws are focused on greater accountability for our schools and to identify both strengths and weaknesses that will ensure improved educational opportunities for our children. Some have complained about the requirements of both laws. Others have, and will, criticize the implementation or hope that the laws will go away. This is unfair to our youth and to our future. We must put aside our different views of the details of the laws and join together for greater accountability throughout public education and for the moral imperative that, in Michigan, we leave no child behind.

I thank you for your leadership and perseverance as we work with our colleagues from the local school districts to implement *Education YES!* and NCLB.

Attachments

**Sea of testing data buries U.S. schools
Complex results, errors delaying state report cards**

**By Stephanie Banchero
Tribune staff reporter
Published November 26, 2003**

State officials are so overwhelmed by the data they must collect under federal education reform that many are releasing "school report cards" riddled with errors or delayed for so long that the information is virtually useless to parents and schools.

From Utah to Pennsylvania, education officials have been trying to analyze mounting piles of student test scores and teacher competency statistics and finding the task far more costly and time-consuming than they imagined.

Illinois education officials spent \$845,000 on a new reporting system, but after repeated problems with the data, they released detailed information to districts only Tuesday--nearly a month after schools were legally bound by state law to publish it and eight months after students took the tests. Even now, some key analysis is missing.

The public reporting of the data is meant to help parents and other taxpayers make decisions based on the performance of schools and districts. If the information is not released until the school year is half over, parents are less likely to switch campuses or demand a better-prepared teacher.

The accuracy of the state report cards also is vital because schools, districts and states that fail to measure up can face sanctions as serious as school closings under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which became law early last year.

The law does not set a date for when the information must be made public, but federal officials had hoped state report cards would be published before the start of a new school year. Many states have failed to meet that goal, and others have made mistakes while trying.

In Louisiana, education officials sent out hundreds of error-ridden school report cards after a computer glitch incorrectly indicated whether groups of students had met state standards. Utah is still struggling to crunch the numbers and get them to parents and schools.

And even though Illinois districts now have the report card data, they have until Dec. 19 to distribute it to parents.

"A lot of states were not very well-prepared for what the law requires," said Bob Linn, co-director of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing. "We should expect some delays because it takes awhile to adjust to a new system, but I am surprised at how long the delays have been."

The federal law requires states to collect and analyze data on student test scores, graduation and attendance rates, and teacher competency levels. States must send the information to school districts, which then must provide it to parents.

Many states, including Illinois, have produced such report cards for years, but the law mandates more detailed reporting. For example, states must list student achievement and test participation rates by ethnic group, income level, special-education status and English language proficiency. They also must collect data on whether teachers are fully licensed.

If even one subgroup of students does not meet state standards, the school is placed on a warning list. If the subgroup continues to fail, the school can face sanctions. The same sanctions also apply to districts.

Across the nation, there are as many reasons for the report card delays as there are delays:

Students made errors when checking their ethnic background on test booklets. Teachers did not ensure that licensing files were up to date. School officials failed to properly classify student income level and special-education status. And states were not equipped to handle the voluminous data.

In Pennsylvania, districts submit teacher-licensing data in the spring. If a district files incomplete or erroneous information, the state flags it to local officials, said Brian Christopher, spokesman for the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

In years past, districts simply ignored the notice because no sanctions were associated with low teacher-competency rates. But the federal law requires schools to notify parents if an unlicensed educator teaches their children.

Christopher said that days before Pennsylvania officials were set to release the state report card, officials pulled parts of it after nearly 100 districts contended the teacher licensing numbers were incorrect. "Now that there are federal sanctions associated with this data, I guess people are starting to take it seriously," Christopher said.

Illinois experienced myriad problems with its data.

State officials found several cases where a student was labeled African-American on the math test booklet but was marked white on the reading exam. Many schools failed to identify whether students were low-income, making it impossible to determine if the school tested 95 percent of its poor children, as required by the federal law.

Lynne Curry, deputy superintendent for the state board of education, said districts statewide made thousands of data errors. State board employees were forced to call more than 300 districts to verify data.

Similar problems cropped up last year, but no one bothered to fix them because sanctions didn't kick in for most schools until this year.

"We preached to school districts about this last year, about how important it was for them to be accurate," Curry said. "But until the rubber meets the road, people don't seem to care all that much."

State officials blamed the delays in part on Deloitte Consulting of Chicago, the firm hired to develop the report card this year. The firm missed deadlines and created error-ridden documents, Curry said, and board employees spent weeks correcting the mistakes.

But Larry Ascough, spokesman for School District U-46 in Elgin, said the information is so late this year, the point is moot.

"This information is history," Ascough said. "These kids took the test ... months ago, and we already are gearing up to take the next state test in a few months. I'm not sure anyone even cares anymore."

Copyright C 2003, Chicago Tribune

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-0311260249nov26,1,671198.story>

du tio YC ind M AP
a o j h e d u l
200 04

M h gan Departme of Ed
De ibe 00

**Education YES! and MEAP
Overview of Project Schedules**

Attached are: 1) the summary schedule of major activities for 2003 and 2004 for the Michigan Educational Assessment Program, Education YES!, and NCLB AYP, as well as, 2) the detailed project schedule. Across the top of the schedule, dates for the coming year are shown in two-week intervals. Major activities for each of the following programs are shown down the left side of the chart:

- A. Elementary and Middle School Report Card
- B. High School Report Card
- C. Fall, 2003 MEAP
- D. Winter, 2004 MEAP
- E. Spring, 2004 MEAP

Only the activities remaining as of December 1, 2003 are shown on the schedule. The shaded bars show the duration of each activity with the date(s) shown being the start and end dates for each activity.

In addition to this summary report, detailed schedules for each of the programs are attached. These will be used by Department staff and contractors to make sure the programs remain on schedule. The column titled "Schedule Reference" shows the detailed project steps associated with each major activity shown on the summary.

FY 2003 - 2004 MEAP Summary Schedule

Start Dates	Schedule Reference	11/17/03	12/01/03	12/15/03	12/29/03	01/12/04	01/26/04	02/09/04	02/23/04	03/06/04	03/20/04	03/27/04	04/10/04	04/18/04	05/02/04	05/16/04	05/30/04	06/13/04	06/27/04	07/12/04	07/27/04
End Dates	Schedule Reference	11/30/03	12/14/03	12/28/03	01/11/04	01/25/04	02/18/04	02/28/04	03/14/04	03/28/04	04/11/04	04/18/04	05/02/04	05/16/04	05/30/04	06/13/04	06/27/04	07/12/04	07/27/04		
Progress Meetings			*				*		*		*		*		*		*		*		
Elem./Middle School Report Cards	74-77								* Once every month, a high level meeting will be held to assess overall progress on this timeline. This meeting will involve the Superintendent's Office, the Office of Educational Assessment, CEPI, and DIT. In the periods between these meetings, the Director of the Office of Educational Assessment will be monitoring weekly progress.												
Resolve AYP Delay Schools (192)	76																				
Appeals Received																					
Report Results	77																				
High School Report Cards	78-84																				
	79																				
	80																				
	81																				
Internal Validation	83																				
Report Results	84																				
Fall MEAP 03	85-100																				
Scan and Score (MI)	102-102																				
Printing	103-100																				
Modify Web Site	100-100																				
Report Results	174-178																				
Winter MEAP 04	180-340																				
Pre-ID Students (Schools)	204-208																				
Print and Ship Test Booklets (Questar)	209-251																				
Schools Receive Test Packages	251-253																				
Schools Administer Tests	255-260																				
Scan and Score (MI)	261-302																				
Report Results	303-332																				
Spring MEAP 04	350-441																				
Pre-ID Students (Schools)	374-377																				
Print and Ship Test Booklets (Questar)	378-386																				
Schools Receive Test Packages	384-386																				
Schools Administer Tests	387-388																				
Scan and Score (MI)	400-440																				
Report Results	441																				

08

FY 2003 - 2004 MEAP Detail Schedule

ID		Task Name	Duration	% Complete	Start	Finish	Predecessor	Resources
4		Planning	102 days	25%	Sep 2 '03	Jan 27 '04		
57		Business Issues	91 days	10%	Sep 11 '03	Jan 21 '04		
20		Technology Issues	102 days	26%	Sep 2 '03	Jan 27 '04		
74		Elementary/Middle School Report Card	43 days	21%	Nov 26 '03	Jan 30 '04		
75	✓	Resolve AYP 192 Delay Schools	7 days	100%	Nov 26 '03	Dec 5 '03		
76	☐	Appeals Resolved	27 days	0%	Dec 15 '03	Jan 23 '04		
77	☐	Report Results	0 days	0%	Jan 30 '04	Jan 30 '04		
78		High School Report Card	44 days?	0%	Nov 26 '03	Jan 30 '04		
79	☐	Data Cleanup	0 days	0%	Nov 26 '03	Nov 26 '03		
80	☐	Modify Web Site	0 days	0%	Dec 5 '03	Dec 5 '03		
81	☐	Appeals Window	5 days?	0%	Dec 15 '03	Dec 19 '03		
82	☐	Appeals Resolved	22 days	0%	Dec 22 '03	Jan 23 '04	81	
83	☐	Internal Validation	6 days?	0%	Jan 21 '04	Jan 28 '04		
84		Report Results	2 days	0%	Jan 29 '04	Jan 30 '04	83	
85		Fall 2003 Execution	173 days?	60%	Jul 28 '03	Mar 31 '04		
86	✓	Print Materials	49 days	100%	Jul 28 '03	Oct 3 '03		
87	✓	TestBklets/AnsDocs Created	15 days	100%	Jul 28 '03	Aug 15 '03		MI
88	✓	TestBklets/AnsDocs Approved	4 days	100%	Aug 18 '03	Aug 21 '03	87	MEAP
89	✓	Camera Ready TestBklets/AnsDocs	1 day	100%	Aug 22 '03	Aug 22 '03	88	MI
90	✓	Print TestBklets/AnsDocs,etc.	15 days	100%	Aug 25 '03	Sep 15 '03	89	Quesstar
91	✓	Prepare Large print tests	8 days	100%	Sep 16 '03	Sep 25 '03	90	
92	✓	Produce Braille tests	3 days	100%	Sep 26 '03	Sep 30 '03	91	
93	✓	Produce CDs for audio version tests	3 days	100%	Oct 1 '03	Oct 3 '03	92	
94	✓	Pre-ID	46 days?	100%	Sep 10 '03	Nov 12 '03		
95	✓	Pre-ID Process	46 days?	100%	Sep 10 '03	Nov 12 '03		
96	✓	Letter sent to school requesting student information	0 days	100%	Sep 10 '03	Sep 10 '03		MEAP
97	✓	Schools to develop student roster	15 days	100%	Sep 10 '03	Sep 30 '03	96	Schools